

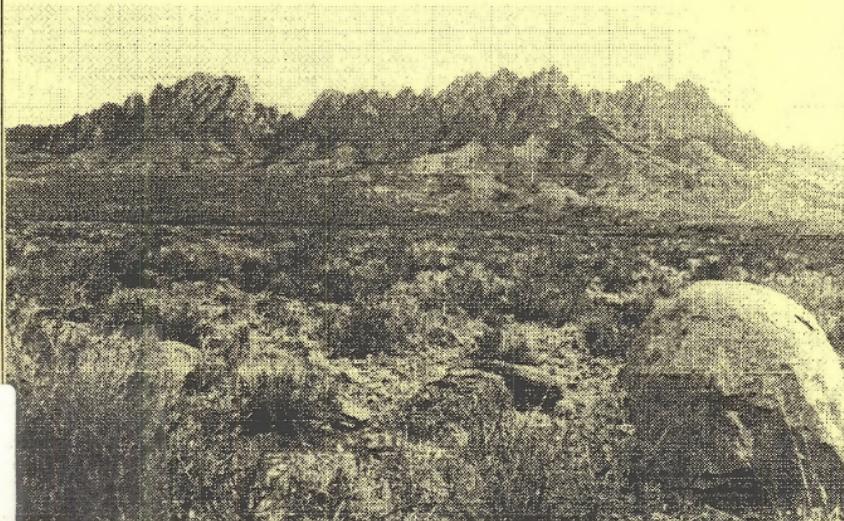


United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Las Cruces District Office
Mimbres Resource Area

April 1993

Mimbres Resource Management Plan
RECORD OF DECISION



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United States Department of the Interior



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Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is the Record of Decision (ROD) and Implementation Summary for the Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP). This document presents information on the recently completed Mimbres RMP. The approval of the RMP begins an exciting new chapter in the management of public land within the Mimbres Resource Area. Many of you contributed time and effort in developing the plan, and we look forward to working with you as the plan is implemented.

This document contains two parts. The first part is the Record of Decision on the Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which concludes over 4 years of planning. The second part is the Implementation Summary which describes the decisions necessary to implement the RMP.

As the ROD states, the Proposed RMP has been accepted as the Approved Plan for the Mimbres Resource Area (with some modification). We will soon begin preparing the Approved Plan and hope to have it out to the public by the end of September 1993.

Sincerely,

Jon Joseph
Area Manager
Mimbres Resource Area

INTRODUCTION

This document formally records the Bureau of Land Management's decisions for managing approximately 3 million surface acres of public land and 4.1 million subsurface acres in the Mimbres Resource Area. The Mimbres Resource Area encompasses BLM-administered public land in Dona Ana, Luna, Hidalgo, and Grant Counties in southwestern New Mexico.

DECISION

The proposed decisions as described in the Proposed Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), dated October 1992 (as modified in Appendix 1) are selected as the Approved Plan.

The RMP was prepared under the regulations for implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 [43 CFR 1600]. The EIS was prepared for this plan in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

Approval of this plan constitutes formal designation of 21 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), 4 Section 202 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), 4 Research Natural Areas (RNAs), and 2 Wild and Scenic River Study Areas. The plan also makes decisions concerning land ownership adjustments, vehicle designations, access, rights-of-way, minerals, recreation, cultural resources, wildlife, watershed, and vegetation management.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Four Alternatives were described and analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS. These Alternatives outlined the management of resources or programs that were considered issues or concerns by BLM and the public. The Alternatives in the Draft Plan represented a reasonable range of possible management options to resolve the identified issues and concerns.

The management of resources and programs not at issue was described in the Continuing Management Guidance section of the plan. The Continuing Management Guidance described how these resources and programs would continue to be managed, regardless of the Alternative selected.

Current Management (No Action) Alternative

This Alternative described the current management of resources and programs at issue, based upon existing land use plans. This Alternative would continue current management, however it does not resolve identified issues and concerns.

Resource Preservation Alternative

This Alternative described the resolution of issues and concerns in a manner that placed primary emphasis on maintaining or improving environmental values. This Alternative would have changed current management to emphasize noncommodity resources and programs such as wilderness, cultural resources, wildlife, and visual resources.

Resource Production Alternative

This Alternative described the resolution of issues and concerns in a manner that placed primary emphasis on making public land available for use and development. This Alternative would have changed current management to emphasize commodity production of resources and programs such as livestock grazing and mining.

Resource Conservation Alternative

This Alternative was the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS and with modification became the Proposed Plan. This Alternative described the resolution of issues and concerns in a manner that provides for a combination of resource uses that allows for economic development and commodity production while protecting important environmental values.

DECISION RATIONALE

The decision to choose the Proposed Plan is based on: 1) the need to resolve the issues and management concerns identified through the planning process, 2) input received from the public, other Federal and State agencies, and State and local governments, 3) planning criteria listed in Chapter 1 of the Proposed Plan, and 4) the environmental analysis of each Alternative considered (contained in Chapter 4 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The Proposed Plan is considered by BLM to best meet the legal mandate of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act for management of the public land under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

MONITORING

The Approved RMP will provide the framework and guidelines for making specific management decisions in the Resource Area for the next 15-20 years. A monitoring program will be developed and included in the Approved RMP. The monitoring program will include evaluation standards for implementing the plan, ensuring conformance with the plan, and determining whether mitigation measures which have been built into the plan are effective in minimizing environmental impacts. A formal evaluation will be conducted every 5 years to determine the adequacy of the RMP and the need for revision. The plan may be amended as needed at any time with full public involvement.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public opinion and input have been sought throughout the planning and decision-making process. In order to continue this process during plan implementation, an annual RMP/Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) Update will be prepared to inform the public of the progress made in implementation of the RMP. This document will also provide information on planned actions for the coming year and explain how the public can become involved in specific land management activities. A public meeting or open house may be held in conjunction with issuing the annual Update. In addition, BLM plans to brief each County Commission on a quarterly basis to discuss the RMP or any other issues affecting the Counties.

PROTEST RESOLUTION

A total of 16 "letters of protest" were received by the Director. Three were determined to be invalid for failure to follow the requirements for protests in the planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.5-2). One letter was withdrawn by the protester following agreement with the Mimbres Resource Area on text changes for the Approved Plan.

The Director then addressed issues in the 12 remaining letters, dismissing the protests with only minor text changes for the Approved Plan. Several protesters raised valid concerns which were addressed by the New Mexico State Director in a written response.

CONSISTENCY

There are no known or identified inconsistencies with the plans, programs, and policies of other Federal agencies and of State and local governments.

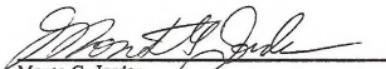
PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF THIS DOCUMENT

All those names on the current RMP mailing list were mailed copies of this ROD and will also be mailed copies of the Approved RMP. In addition, review copies of these documents will be available at all BLM offices in New Mexico as well as most public libraries. Additional copies of the documents are available upon request at the address at the top of the cover letter.

CONCLUSION

This Record of Decision constitutes the final Bureau action on approving the Mimbres RMP. Any person adversely affected by a decision of the Bureau Officer in implementing any portion of this RMP may appeal such action to the Interior Board of Land Appeals pursuant to 43 CFR 4.400 at the time the action is proposed for implementation.

APPROVAL



Monte G. Jordan
Acting State Director, New Mexico
Bureau of Land Management

APR 30 1993

Date



APPENDIX 1

MODIFICATIONS AND CORRECTIONS



APPENDIX 1

MODIFICATIONS AND CORRECTIONS

The following modifications and corrections are a result of comments and protests received on the Proposed Plan. These changes will be carried forward in the Approved Plan.

Summary

P. S-14, Column 1, Proposed Plan, Recreation. Delete "acquisition of six State Parks."

Purpose and Need

P. 1-6, Access, Column 2, last two lines. Delete "and as a last resort, condemnation."

Chapter 2 - Continuing Management Guidance

P. 2-37, Column 1, paragraph 2, line 27. Add the following paragraph:

"The specific land disposal area described as T. 20 S., R. 3 E., Sections 28 S1/2, 33, and 34; T. 21 S., R. 3 E., Sections 3, 4, 7 SE1/4, 8, 9, 10, 14 N1/2, 15 N1/2, 17, and 18 will be retained. A right-of-way (NMNM66383) has been granted to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and a subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (NM-030-45) was signed in April 1990 reserving the public land for ground water monitoring wells. Based on the ground water studies, these lands may need to be withdrawn from multiple use management to protect public safety."

P. 2-38, Column 1, paragraph 5, last line. After "Appendix H-2", add:

"The route identified would be adhered to as much as possible in the development of the trail, but trail development would not necessarily be limited to the corridor. If deviation from the identified corridor is necessary because of water needs or to facilitate easement acquisition, this would be addressed through the plan amendment process."

P. 2-44, Column 2 under Land Treatments, line 7. Beginning with the word "Creosotebush", delete all text through line 18 ending with "breaks". Replace with the following:

"Chemical herbicides will be used for control of noxious weeds, during ROW maintenance, and control of competing or unwanted vegetation consistent with the New Mexico Record of Decision (ROD) for Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in the Thirteen Western States (August 1991). Such actions will be identified in site-specific environmental analysis on proposed vegetation control plans, which will be documented using an interdisciplinary approach.

Minimum width buffer strips and other criteria stipulated in the New Mexico ROD (see page 10) will provide an adequate level of protection in almost all situations. For those situations when additional protection is warranted, the buffer may be extended or other criteria developed that is appropriate to the local area.

Within the Mimbres Resource Area, additional protection of perennial streams will be provided by utilizing a 0.5 mile buffer when pelletized Tebuthiuron is used to treat creosotebush, mesquite, and mixed desert shrub, except during ROW maintenance operations. For economic reasons, usually only areas two sections in size or greater (1,240 acres) would be treated. Pelleted Tebuthiuron is also not effective and would not be used on the following range sites: bottomland, draw, clay, salt flats, salty bottomland, igneous hills, limestone hills, malpais, and breaks."

P. 2-47, Column 1, paragraph 2. Delete the last six lines.

Chapter 3 - Affected Environment

P. 3-2, Column 1, paragraph 2, line 4. Add in parentheses "volcanic tuff, granite, monzonite."

P. 3-9, Column 1, paragraph 3, line 10. "Harky" should be "Harkey."

P. 3-10, Column 1, paragraph 3, line 5. Add "Uvas and Chaparral."

P. 3-24, Column 2, paragraph 2, line 4. "12,000 B.C." should be "9,500 B.C."

P. 3-26, Column 2, paragraph 2, line 18. "chamisa" should be "rabbitbrush."

Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences

P. 4-28, Table 4-7. Add the following: "Allotment Number 15001, W. F. Blythe, 544."

Appendix H

P. H-12, Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC map. This map has several land status and boundary errors which will be corrected in the Approved Plan.

P. H-25, Gila Middle Box ACEC map. "T-18W and T-17W" should be "R-18W and R-17W."

Page following H-36, Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC map. Add lands acquired from New Mexico State University to base map and amend boundary. The Range numbers at the bottom of the map should be R2E, R3E, R4E, and R5E.

P. H-38, Robledo Mountains ACEC, Column 2, last line. Add "semi-primitive motorized."

Page following H-41, Uvas Valley ACEC map. Delete the Luna/Dona Ana County line from the map.

P. H-50, Aden Lava Flow RNA, Column 2. Add "Develop grazing activity plan."

P. H-53, Antelope Pass RNA map. Section numbers are shifted incorrectly 1 mile to the north.

Appendix I

P. I-4, Pena Blanca and Organ Needles WSA map. The Range numbers at the bottom of the map should be R3E, R4E, and R5E.

P. I-11, Gray Peak WSA map. This map has several land status errors which will be corrected in the Approved Plan.



MIMBRES RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

This section is a summary of decisions that would require action to implement the RMP. An annual RMP update will be published that will contain a similar section identifying those actions that have been completed and those scheduled for completion in the upcoming fiscal year. The public is encouraged to become involved in the implementation of these decisions.



MINERALS

NO.	DECISION
1.	Process Oil and Gas Leases/Permits
2.	Process Geothermal Leases/Permits
3.	Process Sodium and Potassium Leases/Permits
4.	Process Mining Notices Under 43 CFR 3802 and 3809
5.	Process Mining Plans of Operation
6.	Process Mineral Material Sales
7.	Implement Leasable Mineral Stipulations
8.	Implement Salable Mineral Stipulations
9.	Prepare Locatable Mineral Withdrawal Petitions for Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC, Apache Box ACEC, and Paleozoic Trackways RNA
10.	Prepare Locatable Mineral Withdrawal Petition for Guadalupe Canyon ACEC

LANDS

NO.	DECISION
11.	Issue ROWs, Leases, and Permits
12.	Issue R&PP Patents and Leases
13.	Review Withdrawals
14.	Implement ROW Avoidance/Exclusion Area Restrictions
15.	Dispose of Public Land Identified for Disposal
16.	Acquire State/Private Lands in Special Management Areas
17.	Terminate C&MU Classifications

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

NO. DECISION

18. Conduct Landfill Investigations

ACCESS

NO. DECISION

19. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Cooke's Range
20. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Pyramid Mountains
21. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Organ Mountains
22. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Robledo Mountains
23. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Big Hatchet Mountains
24. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Peloncillo Mountains
25. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Alamo Hueco Mountains
26. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Little Hatchet Mountains
27. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Animas Mountains
28. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Cedar Mountains
29. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Florida Mountains
30. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Burro Mountains
31. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Apache Box
32. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Gila Lower Box
33. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Gila Middle Box
34. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for San Simon Cienega
35. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for West Potrillo Mountains
36. Develop Route Analysis/Access Plan for Bear Creek

RANGE

NO.	DECISION
37.	Maintain/Revise Allotment Categories
38.	Monitor and Evaluate Allotments
39.	Maintain, Develop, and Implement AMPs/Grazing Plans
40.	Develop and Implement Range Improvement Projects
41.	Issue Range Improvement Permits
42.	Issue Grazing Permits and Leases
43.	Develop Grazing Activity Plan for Alamo Hueco Mountains ACEC and Set Carrying Capacity for U-Bar Allotment
44.	Develop Grazing Activity Plan for Apache Box ACEC
45.	Revise AMP Covering Big Hatchet Mountains ACEC
46.	Develop Grazing Activity Plans for Cooke's Range ACEC
47.	Revise Existing Monitoring Plan to Consider Grazing Impacts in Lordsburg Playa
48.	Re-categorize Allotments in Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC to "I" and Develop Grazing Activity Plans
49.	Revise AMP Covering Uvas Valley ACEC
50.	Develop Grazing Activity Plan for Cowboy Spring ACEC
51.	Construct Enclosures in Aden Lava Flow RNA

VEGETATION

NO.	DECISION
52.	Process Vegetation Sales
53.	Evaluate Activities in Fragile Land Areas
54.	Implement Land Treatments
55.	Establish Desired Plant Community Objectives in the Development of Activity Plans
56.	Establish New Vegetation Sale Areas

SOIL, AIR, AND WATER

NO.	DECISION
57.	Evaluate Activities in Fragile Lands Areas
58.	Develop Watershed Management Plan for Rincon/Hatch Area (Both Sides of River)
59.	Develop Watershed Management Plan for Gila River Watershed
60.	Develop Watershed Management Plan for Starvation/China Draw Watersheds
61.	Develop Watershed Management Plan for Corralitos Area
62.	Develop Watershed Management Plan for North Side of Cedar Mountains
63.	Develop Watershed Management Plan for Uvas Valley
64.	Develop Watershed Management Plan for Alamo Hueco/Big Hatchet Mountains
65.	Develop Watershed Management Plan for Pyramid Mountains Area

FIRE MANAGEMENT

NO.	DECISION
66.	Develop Prescribed Burn Plans
67.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Big Hatchet Mountains ACEC
68.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Cooke's Range ACEC
69.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Florida Mountains ACEC
70.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Apache Box ACEC
71.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC
72.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Cowboy Spring ACEC
73.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC
74.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Granite Gap ACEC
75.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Guadalupe Canyon ACEC
76.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Northern Peloncillo Mountains ACEC
77.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Robledo Mountains ACEC
78.	Develop Prescribed Natural Fire Plan for Antelope Pass RNA

WILDLIFE

NO.	DECISION
79.	Maintain/Revise/Continue to Implement Existing HMPs and CRMPs
80.	Continue Application of Existing Wildlife Area/Time Stipulations
81.	Continue Application of Existing Fencing Standards
82.	Develop Wildlife HMP for Cooke's Range/Nutt Area
83.	Develop Wildlife HMP for Robledo Mountains
84.	Develop Wildlife HMP for Uvas Mountains
85.	Develop Wildlife HMP for Cedar Mountains
86.	Develop Wildlife HMP for West Potrillo Mountains
87.	Develop Wildlife HMP for Columbus Area

CULTURAL RESOURCES

NO.	DECISION
88.	Continue to Patrol Archeological Sites
89.	Continue Inventory of Cultural and Paleontological Sites
90.	Continue National Register Nominations
91.	Continue Section 106 Compliance
92.	Continue Implementation of Fort Cummings and Organ Mountains CRMPs
93.	Re-construct Livestock Exclosure for Old Town
94.	Initiate New Field Schools
95.	Implement Protection Measures for Caves and Rockshelters
96.	Close Road to Bruton Bead Site
97.	Fence/Cover with Sterile Fill Los Tules Site
98.	Complete and Implement Trackways Study Recommendations
99.	Conduct Class III Inventories in ACECs
100.	Implement Butterfield Trail CRM
101.	Acquire Butterfield Trail Stage Stations
102.	Research Historic Trails and Roads
103.	Encourage Paleontological Studies

RECREATION

NO.	DECISION
104.	Dedicate Scenic/Backcountry Byways in Organ Mountains
105.	Conduct Cave Inventories
106.	Implement ORV Designations
107.	Continue Implementation of Organ Mountains CRMP
108.	Continue Implementation of Fort Cummings CRMP
109.	Continue Designation Process for CDNST
110.	Complete Wild and Scenic River Studies and Make Suitability Recommendations
111.	Dedicate Other Scenic/Backcountry Byways
112.	Complete ROS Inventories
113.	Continue Implementation of Gila Lower Box CRMP
114.	Develop RAMP for Dona Ana Mountains
115.	Develop RAMP for Kilbourne Hole NNL

WILDERNESS

NO.	DECISION
116.	Continue Wilderness Interim Management
117.	Complete Wilderness Studies and Make Recommendations for Section 202 WSAs

RIPARIAN

NO. DECISION

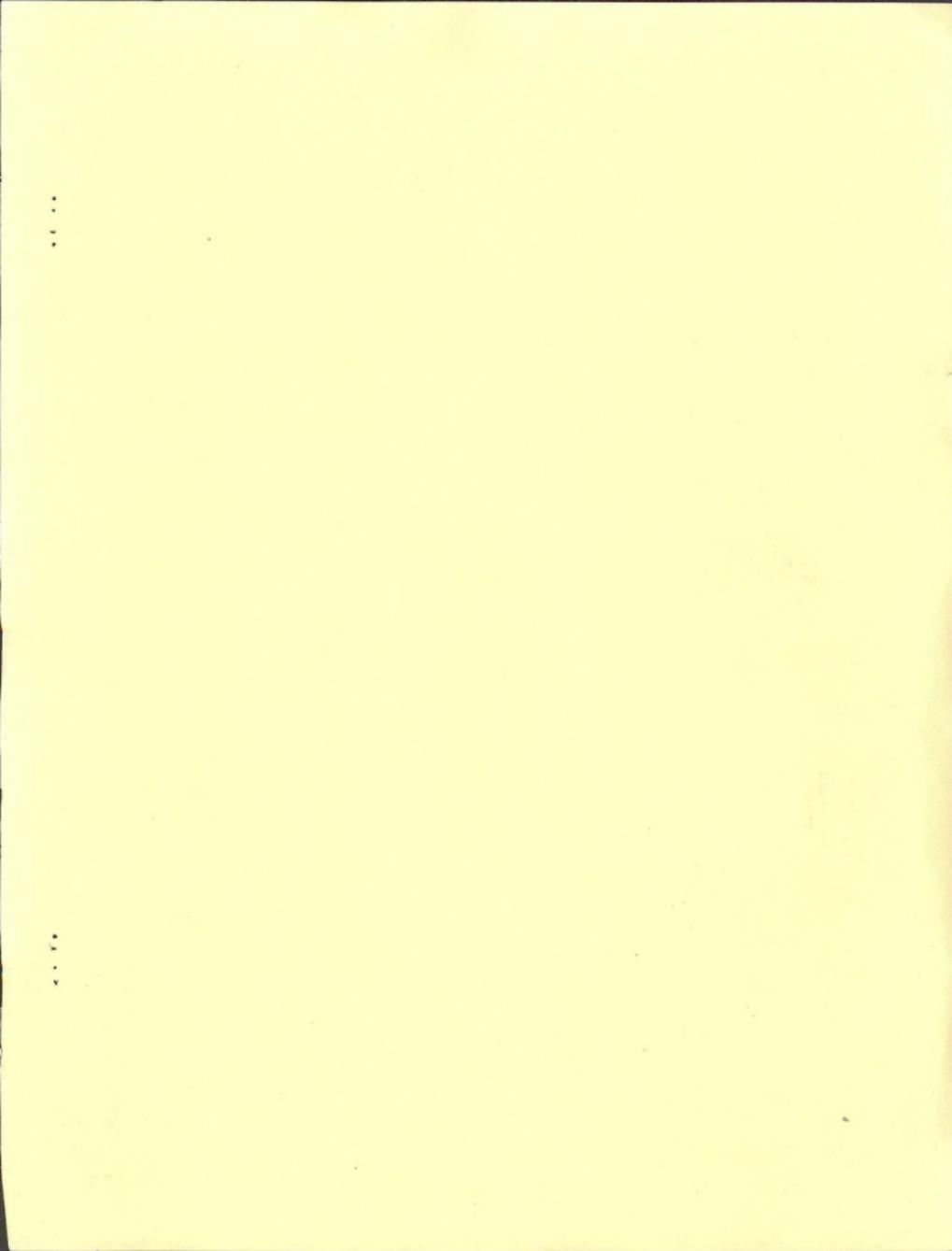
118. Continue Implementation/Maintenance of Placitas Arroyo Coordinated Management Plan (CMP)
119. Protect/Enhance Riparian Areas in Cooke's Range and Alamo Hueco Mountains ACECs
120. Develop Grazing Activity Plan for Apache Box ACEC
121. Continue Implementation of Organ Mountains CRMP
122. Exclude Livestock from Bear Creek ACEC
123. Evaluate Relocation of Road in Guadalupe Canyon ACEC
124. Develop Grazing Activity Plan for Cowboy Spring ACEC

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

NO. DECISION

125. Inventory, Monitor, Conduct Clearances, and Participate in Recovery Planning Efforts

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